

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DACCA 04413 051009Z

16

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8001

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EO 11652: N/A

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SUBJ: NEW GOVERNMENT'S USE OF THE PRESS

REF: SECTO 10208

1. PUBLICATION ON FRONT PAGES OF DACCA NEWSPAPERS OF SEPTEMBER 4 OF TEXT OF SECRETARY'S MESSAGE TO FOREIGN MINISTER ABU SAYEED CHOUDHURY (REFTEL) IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF NEW REGIME'S EFFORTS TO PLAY UP ITS ACCEPTANCE BY OTHER NATIONS. ALL EXCHANGES WITH FOREIGN LEADERS AND CALLS UPON PRESIDENT MUSHTAQUE BY AMBASSADORS HAVE BEEN PROMINENTLY REPORTED IN THE PRESS. THIS SAME CONCERN WITH LEGITIMACY, WE BELIEVE, ALSO UNDERLIES THE FRONT-PAGE REPORTING OF CALLS ON MUSHTAQUE BY DELEGATIONS OF BANGALEES REPRESENTING VARIOUS INTEREST GROUPS AND OF STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT BY PROMINENT MEMBERS OF FORMER POLITICAL PARTIES.

2. ALTHOUGH THE NEW GOVERNMENT IS DOING ITS BEST TO PREVENT FOREIGN JOURNALISTS FROM REPORTING ON THE COUP FROM DACCA, IT HAS NOT HESITATED TO MAKE USE OF ARTICLES AND COMMENTARIES APPEARING ABROAD IN AN EFFORT TO JUSTIFY THE OVERTHROW OF

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PAGE 02 DACCA 04413 051009Z

MUJIB. SEVERAL BRITISH, AMERICAN, AND JAPANESE PRESS ACCOUNTS HAVE APPEARED ON THE FRONT PAGES, JUDICIOUSLY EDITED TO (A) HIGHLIGHT THE FAILINGS OF MUJIB PERSONALLY AND AS PRESIDENT AND (B) ELIMINATE ANY REFERENCES TO THE ASSASSINATION ITSELF AND THE POSSIBLE MOTIVATIONS OF THE COUP PERPETRATORS. THIS DENIGRATION OF MUJIB (THE TERM "BANGABHANDHU" HAS BEEN EDITED OUT OF ALL ACCOUNTS) IS, OF COURSE, ACCOMPANIED BY THE FEW COMMENTS FAVORABLE TO MOSHTAQUE PUBLISHED AS YET IN FOREIGN JOURNALS. THE EFFORT TO DISCREDIT THE FORMER REGIME EVIDENTLY COMPELLED THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO REACH BACK A YEAR IN TIME IN ONE INSTANCE FOR MATERIAL FROM THE WASHINGTON POST. ON SEPTEMBER 1 FORMER RED CROSS LEADER AND POLITICAL BOSS OF DACCA, GAZI GOLAM MUSTAFA, WAS ARRESTED (CAPTURED, WE UNDERSTAND, IN A BRICKYARD SOMEWHERE IN DACCA DISTRICT). TWO DAYS LATER, ALL THE NEWSPAPERS PRINTED SELECTIONS FROM LEW SIMONS' UNCOMPLIMENTARY ARTICLE ON GAZI GOLAM, WRITTEN IN

SEPTEMBER, 1974.

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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